8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F'69 Fang F'69

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[title page]

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G: Bennett D-5 (in.1898) 1899 F309 Fang F309

ETHNOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON THE FANG.

By Albert L. Bennett, M.D., F.R.S.

[Read March 22nd, 1899.]

CONTENTS.

I. Introduction.
II. Physical and Moral Characteristics.
III. Clothing, Ornaments, Painting and Tattooing.
IV. Habitations.
V. Navigation, Boats, Nets, Fishing, Traps.
VI. Handicraft, Fire, Machinery.
VII. Customs.
VIII. Invocation, Natural Forces, Conservation.
IX. Circumcision.
X. Food, Cooking.
XI. Anthropophagy.
XII. Religion, Fetish or Ombwiri (continued).
XIII. Witchcraft, Casting Evil Substance.
XIV. The Ngi (a Fang Secret Society).
XV. War, Hostages.
XVI. Hunting Dogs.
XVII. Burials.
XVIII. Alibi.
XIX. Abnormalities (Natural Deformation), Albinism, Erythrism, Hermaphroditism, Deformations (Artificial Deformation), A. Facial; B. Dental.
XX. Fang Proverbs and Sayings.

I BEG the honour to come before you this evening, for the purpose of making known to you the result of my observations while dwelling and labouring among that great and powerful tribe of the Bantu family, known as Fang. In presenting this paper, I do so fully aware of its deficiency; but the information obtained from natives was never accepted nor recorded as authentic, until it had been frequently confirmed by others. I also desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Council of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, for sending me a copy of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, a book which ever proved an invaluable guide and help to me while living among the Fang, and studying their customs.

I.—Introduction.

The large tribe of people known as Fang inhabiting a considerable portion of the French Congo was first described by Du Chaillu.

Records show that in 1867 the French naval officer Admiral Fleuriot de Langle placed the number of Fang within French territory at nearly sixty thousand. Since that time this powerful tribe has rapidly increased in numbers. Between the Ogowe River and the Gaboon, the Fang may be counted by thousands,

R. Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F309 Fang F309

592
E31
S94
912
781

1 and 2. Fiji combs used in the Fang Secret Society; 3, 4. Fang idols; 5. Wooden dagger-sheath; 6. Fiji tattoo; 7. Shoulder-knife.

[p. 66(N)]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F309 Fang F309

147
291
516

FANG MEN.

392
516
352

FANG HOUSE.

[p. 66(B)]

S. Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F389 Fang F389

392
291
492
492

FANG WOMAN.

492
291
302
411

FANG YOUTHS.

[p. 66(C)]

B: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F'389 F'ang F'389

595
292

FANG DANCE.

344
352
516

ASEMO OR PALAVER HOUSE.

[p. 66(D)]

B. Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F'99 Fang F'99

and like a victorious army they are steadily approaching the coast, building towns and displacing weaker tribes. That fine race of people, the Mpongwes, often spoken of as the "aristocratic tribe," and ranking first in the scale of civilization above all other tribes in the French Congo, is rapidly dying out, and they are already being supplanted even at Gaboon by the migratory Fang.

The Bulu people inhabiting a portion of the German sphere of influence in West Africa are without doubt very closely related to, if not a direct offshoot from, the Fang; their customs are identical and their language so markedly similar that a person who is able to speak Bulu is readily understood by the Fang. The first day of my arrival among the Fang, after residing in Bulu-land, I was able to make known the reason for my coming and to ask and answer ordinary questions. While visiting on a small island called Nengo-nengo in the Ntem River, a very old Fang man told me as follows: When a lad his grandfather had told him that, a long time ago, many of his tribe "changed their towns." These people first travelled far in canoes, and then after journeying for very many days through the forest, they "stopped walking and made new towns," and they did not return. My informant's father had told him later more about these people; they had been heard from, and their long absence from the original tribe had so changed them that "they spoke new words" (a new language).

Examples could be given almost without limit of the great similarity in the language as spoken by the Bulu and Fang. A few will suffice; and I will select from the proverbs of the people which are also identical. Tell a Bulu man to hurry with his work, he will often reply, "*Alo do dayi ba?* eaid?" (Will one day eat an elephant?). The Fang speak the same proverb thus: "*Alo awui ba?* eaid?" Again, the Bulu use the words *Mido ngon* (the days that are past), *Mido ane* (the days that are to come), *Mido nnemo* (all the days). These sayings and numerous similar ones are in daily use among the Fang, the words used and the idiom being almost identically the same as in Bulu. I have wondered if the account given me by the old Fang man at Nengo-nengo about the people who years ago "changed their towns," might not be of more than passing interest as touching the genesis of the Bulu.

The Fang people are spread over an immense area of country, and when questioned regarding their numbers they usually reply, "There are Fang and Fang; if you walk and sleep in towns and towns for many *nnems* (months) you will find Fang." In the future it will be found that in the ethnography of equatorial Africa the Fang will hold a very important place. As before stated they are unquestionably closely related to the Bulu, and Compiègne recognized a marked similarity between them and the Oyeila, Mombottu and Nyamnyam people. There are several scattered tribes of dwarfs among the Fang. Five of these pigmies live within two miles of my station, and they tell me that most of their people will soon "move their towns" and come to live on the banks of the Ntemo river. The Fang people look on the pigmies as a very clever and superior people, and not without good reason. An old headman told me that the *nnem ngui* (dwarfs) first

8: Bennett D-9 (ca. 1898) 1899 F309 Fang F309

[327] discovered how to work *obi* (iron) and thus taught others. They are also skilful hunters, and frequently succeed in killing game when others fail. In trade, it is almost impossible to cheat a dwarf, hence the Fang saying, "*Mbo wui mudidi mvie, mam ngui ndidi wuiti.*" ("You can cheat a Fang twice, a dwarf once.) In this proverb the word "*wui*" equals Fang (see photographs and measurements of Fang dwarfs).

[326] The Fang are cannibals and only fear of the authorities keeps them in check. In the autumn of 1899 a man was killed and eaten within two miles of our mission station on the Nkomo river. I heard of the affair two days after the man had been killed, and taking a boat hurried down to the place accompanied by one of the sons of King "Kelen" from Nengo-nengo, as guide. In the palaver house of the town was a captive boy in chains. The people of this town would not admit having eaten a man, yet did not deny it; they said that the human bones in a hole behind the palaver house were those of a man who had "died two days before." I afterward learnt that the captive boy had been killed and eaten a few days after my visit. Several Fang have admitted to me that "some Fang eat man meat," and they have been told that it is far more enjoyable to eat them *gnat*. My informants always added that they would not do such a thing—"only bad Fang did so." What I have learned from others and my own observations lead me to believe that an immense tract of country in West Africa from a little north of the equatorial line extending even as far southward as to include a portion of the German sphere of influence in the Cameroons, is occupied by numerous anthropophagous tribes all more or less closely related.

II.—*Physical and Moral Characteristics.*

[192] Physically the Fang are a fine people. They may be classed as of medium size. Some of the males are exceptionally large and well built. At Fenkehlling, the Fang village on the Nkomo river, where I reside, there is a man belonging to the Bakele tribe who is the largest and finest specimen of humanity I have ever seen in Africa (photo shown on screen).

The skin colour of the Fang is sooty-black or dark reddish-brown, chocolate (numbers 2 and 3 Topinard's scale); coal-black skins (number 1, Topinard's scale), are in the minority. The skin is smooth and when well cared for, as it very often is, it feels soft and velvety. In the adult the skin is lighter in the axilla; the palms of the hand and soles of feet are permanently yellow. The average Fang eye has a dark iris (class 1, Topinard's scale), and the eye-balls are placed with their long axes nearly in one horizontal plane. I have occasionally noticed a compression of the outer angle of the opening, mostly in females, strongly suggestive of the "almond eye." The hair may be classed as black and woolly. It is uniformly scattered over the hairy scalp; the hairs are coarse in texture. The males seem to

[301] have an aversion to hair on the face and frequently pluck it out; only a small percentage grow beards.

In adult males hair is often quite abundant on the chest and forearms.

B. Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

The face is oval in form.* The average nose is of the negroid type (short, broad, nearly straight), Fig. 7, Topinard; or the *Acetabuloid or Papuan* (broad, with the lower part forming a flattened and depressed bowl), Fig. 8, Topinard's scale. The skull is thick and strong. Very often the brows are depressed deeply, the cheek bones are prominent, and at the angle of the inferior maxillary bone there is an inclination to bulging outward. The alæ nasi are broad and thick, and the nasal bridge often much depressed giving the typical, flat, turned up nose of the negro. Yet I have observed among the Fang some handsome aquiline noses, and quite frequently the *Acetabuloid or Papuan* type. I have frequently noticed that the possessors of the aquiline, or *Acetabuloid* type of nose, showed a higher degree of intelligence and a more genuine desire to learn "the white man's ways."

The ears are large and well developed, inclined to spread outward and having broad thick lobes. The teeth are good and symmetrical; Fang men and women file the upper and lower incisors to a fine point and give as their reason for so doing, that it is *mbeng* (beautiful). The head of *an* average Fang male sits well on the shoulders, the neck is strong and muscular. The "Adam's apple" is not highly developed. Very little attention is given to the cultivation of hair on the upper lip.

The breasts of Fang women are very pendulous after bearing children; and in some cases the breasts in males are very highly developed (gleets on women).

The muscles of the arms, back, buttocks and thighs are often splendidly developed, far more so than in the Mpongwe, Malayo and many other West African tribes. The Mpongwes are rapidly degenerating. In the male Fang the gluteal muscles are not highly developed. The gluteal muscles in the female are often developed to a very high degree, measuring round from 36½ inches to 39½ inches.

Fifteen Fang males were measured and averaged as follows:

Height 5 feet 9 inches.
Chin to pubes 27½ inches.
Pubes to inner malleolus 33½ inches.
Inner malleolus to tip of great toe 8½ inches.
Shoulder to wrist 24½ inches.
Wrist to point of index finger 8½ inches.

In males the thumb is long and broad in the terminal phalanx; the nails of the hand are broad and flat. I have often seen a man use his great toe to pick up an object off the ground, and flexing the leg bring the object to his hand. When journeying through the bush with a caravan it is very interesting to notice how the native uses the great toe to aid him in climbing a steep hill. The sexual appetites is very highly developed, especially in the males. The women are the

* It has not been possible for me to devote the time needed for a detailed study of Fang crania. The few Bube and Fang skulls I have had opportunity for examining presented very little, if any, different characteristics. The skulls I examined were decidedly prognathous, but not large.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F319 Fang F319

[192] head-winners and some are strong and muscular, while many more are weak and worn out from ceaseless toil.

The Fang make good carriers, and will do a splendid day's journey even in the [92] wet season with load forest trails, if not overloaded. A carrier's load should never [147] exceed 25 kilogrammes, and 20 would pay better on a long journey. The first day out with a caravan the men usually drag along slowly, until their loads settle well down in the *bingi* and fit their backs. The *bingi* is a very ingenious contrivance for carrying a load in; it is usually made from a forest vine with a plaited head strap. To hurry carriers the first day is a bad mistake; poorly adjusted loads chafe and cause sore backs, and before night the whole caravan is tired out and sulky. It is a wise traveller in Africa as elsewhere who knows how to save his men.

[95] A very noticeable fact among the Fang is the scarcity of old men. I [84] attribute this largely to the ravages of syphilis; the same terrible disease that has done so much towards the degeneration of numerous coast tribes, and which is already playing fearful havoc among the Fang. Indolent, untrustworthy and warlike, they are nevertheless a most companionable people. [81] The slightest piece of drollery or a joke immediately causes laughter. It has been my privilege to visit many foreign lands including China, Japan and Korea, yet never in my life have I met such an absolutely good-natured, fun-loving people as the Fang.

[84] The men are not fond of work. They frequently ask me for something to do to "earn a cloth." If I tell them to cut brass poles or good clean bark in the forest, they decline. A male Fang's idea of work is to sit in the *Abeng* (or palaver house) and make fish lines by rolling pineapple fibre along the upper [203] portion of his thigh, or to manufacture *Abi* (roof thatch). At these occupations he can converse with all comers, hear the news and take his part in talking a palaver. [67] They are a revengeful people and will keep up a palaver over a woman for many years. If they do not succeed in shooting a man during a palaver they do not [73] hesitate to fire at and kill a woman, while captives held as hostages are often treated with great cruelty.

[56] The women regard virtue very lightly. Before marriage a girl can do nearly [57] as she pleases. It is absolutely safe to state that it would be almost impossible [59] to find a maiden in a Fang village over sixteen years of age. *Adultery* is common, [62] and one of the chief causes of "women palavers." Women rank first in value as goods for trade, next in value are goats, then guns and cloth. The greed for goods has a strong hold on the people. They learn quickly but have very little originality. They have no cleanly rites. Their habits are very dirty; they will wash in a [56] small pool of water and, while bathing, fill the gourds or imported jugs with the water in which they are washing and use it for domestic purposes. In many other ways they are absolutely filthy, and doomed to the level of brute creation. They [134] are not over-burdened with modesty, both sexes frequently bathe together in a perfectly nude condition. A male Fang passes a large percentage of his time in

G: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F309 Fang F309

the palaver house, where he loves to sit and gossip around the log fire, or lounge on the *Bamy* (a native bed of poles). 517

Dancing is a favourite pastime, especially at the time of new moon, when the dance seems to have some religious significance. A Fang dance is a sight worth seeing; arrayed in long streaming armlets of dried grass, and large bunches of forest leaves and feathers cloths tied around the ankles for castanets, they go through a series of rapid and graceful movements, some of which are not entirely free from obscenity. Flaming torches made of resin wrapped in plantain leaves are stuck in the ground and the dancers keep up a perfect fusillade, the whole making a weird and extremely interesting spectacle. With short intervals of rest the dance usually continues throughout the night until daybreak (photo of dance shown on screen). 535 [573]

III.—*Clothing, Ornaments, Painting and Tattooing.*

Fang men and women usually go about bareheaded; some obtain imported straw and felt hats from the traders and are very proud of them. A red worsted night-cap sold at the factories is very popular and much worn. These head coverings are chiefly worn for ornament and not to afford protection from the sun or weather. Until the opening up of trade among the Fang people their clothing amounted to almost nothing. The men wore a waist cloth made of bark from certain trees, a strong, tough, fibrous material, and the women wore a girdle stripped from the plantain stem, with some leaves from the bush or a piece of the plantain leaf tucked through the girdle in front and passed downward, backward and upward between the limbs and fastened to the girdle behind. Very often the women wore a kind of bustle made of dried grass dyed black, or red. In string dress the women are very careful to first arrange the bustle. The native bark cloth, the girdle and bustle, are still worn in the bush towns; the women often make the girdle of imported glass beads strung on string made from pineapple fibre, but people living in towns along the river banks wear imported clothes obtained in trade. As a general rule boys and girls run about without clothing until five or six years of age. Imported cloth is worn by both sexes and is often sewn together very skilfully and decorated with pieces of different colours. There are no recognised peculiarities of dress restricted to the subdivision of tribes. The cloth is cut out and sewed by each individual owner unless it is a trade cloth previously sewn. Cloth is usually laundered and worn as a simple wrapper around the waist, and held in place by rolling in and tucking the upper border on itself. The upper portion of the body is not much covered by the cloth although some men and women wear it tied high up around the neck. There is no difference between the indoor and outdoor clothing. When imported needles and thread can be obtained they are used, but I have seen very skilful sewing done with a sharp piece of bamboo for a needle and thread made of pineapple fibre. Upon the death of parents, clothes descend to the children. In saluting a visitor it is not customary to remove a hat or cap, if one is being worn, or any other article of clothing. 291 [540] [549] [578] [576]

B. Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F319 Fang F319

291 clothing. The Fang do not use any coverings to protect the feet. Rank is not
[294] distinguished by the dress, very often the brightest and cleanest waggers are worn
[321] by the young men while the *homme* (headsman) is often clothed in a dirty old rag. Very often the *homme* wears an imported straw or felt hat obtained in trade, and this alone distinguishes him as headsman of the town. Next to the possession of women and guns, a Fang man's great desire is to own "mouth cloth."

Personal Ornaments.

Head.—The Fang dress their hair in the same manner as the Bulu, and the
302 way they build it up on the head over wooden shapes is often very remarkable
291 and shows considerable skill. Very often the hair is built up over these shapes
301 in ridges, the upper edge of the ridge having white shirt buttons fastened along it or brass headed tacks driven in. Wigs are used and very skilfully made. Very often the term wig would be a misnomer, for the ingenious contrivance made to fit over the bald head is often entirely devoid of hair, being simply a close-fitting skull cap knitted with string made from the pineapple fibre. The wigs are usually decorated with shirt buttons or imported glass beads. The hair is frequently plaited and twisted into ringlets by both sexes; dyeing the hair is not practised. Beads and white shirt buttons are worn on the hair in large quantities, also large cowrie shells dyed with red wood powder. The beads and buttons are often sewed on pieces of goat or deer skin, a separate portion decorating each side of the head, connected by a string of beads passing across the forehead.

Moustaches are seldom cultivated, beards when worn are allowed to grow naturally; but both are frequently removed by depilation; shaving is not
301 practised. Ornaments are frequently worn in the ears, and are usually suspended by a small cord passed through a hole in the lobe. Women and young girls when returning from work in the forest or gardens frequently cluster grasses, leaves of vines and fragrant herbs around their ears; it is a rather pretty custom. Certain fetish charms are worn suspended from the ear; women frequently use for an ear fetish the small quills from a porcupine's tail, and they say it will bring them children. Brass and iron ear-rings are also worn.

Males do not seem to feel inclined to ornament the nose, but many Fang
[309] women delight to do so. They pierce the triangular cartilage with a long slender bamboo pin: the pins sometimes project out three inches on either side of the nose. Very often a medium-sized porcupine quill is used as the ornament, in place of bamboo; it certainly looks better. Some women thus decorated look very repulsive. A female who is credited with considerable power as a medicine woman will almost invariably have the nose pierced and decorated. Ornaments are not worn in the lips or cheeks.

Body.—Men, women, and children wear necklaces of glass beads, the beads of very small antelope, and certain forest beans, are strung and worn around the neck. Bristles from the tail of an elephant are used for the same purpose. When

R. Bennett D-5 (ca. 1958) 1959 F'89 Fang F'89

to ornament, a necklace is made from bleached grass plaited; it is worn by both sexes. A very favourite fetish charm to suspend from a necklace is a leopard's tooth. I have frequently seen the two tusks of a wild boar or "Wart hog" worn round the neck as an ornament, and have succeeded in bringing specimens away easily by the women. Imported thick brass wire is wound round the forearm from wrist to elbow in a very favourite armlet; it is kept highly polished. Brass wire is often wound so tightly round the biceps as to seriously interfere with circulation. Broad pieces of beaten brass are worn on the arms, and ivory bracelets are much valued. Sometimes six or seven rings of ivory are cut from a tusk, and all worn on one arm. Finger and thumb rings are usually worn by the women; they are made of brass, copper, or iron, and are usually very thick and heavy.

Rings are no indication of rank or marriage. It is not uncommon to see a woman with three heavy brass rings on one thumb, and eight or ten similar rings on the fingers. Narrow girdles of leopard, goat or deer skins are worn across the chest to support the native fighting knife and bunch of fetish charms. I have been visited by a headman wearing no less than twenty-three charms.

Legs and feet.—Leglets and anklets of brass are much worn and sought after by women. Brass leg rings imported by traders are in great demand. These does not appear to be any special time set for commencing to wear anklets; most infants are frequently decorated with them. Some of the leglets are very heavy, and many women wear ten or more on one leg. These rings often fit very tightly and impede circulation, or chafe and cause nasty indolent ulcers. The ankles and feet often swell and become very painful as a result of insufficient blood supply. Two rings are of iron and brass largely worn, and fit so tightly that the ring is often deeply imbedded in the flesh. Usually only one ring is worn on a single toe.

Painting and Tattooing.

Painting.—The method of painting the body by smearing an outward preparation mixed with palm oil, so largely practised by the Bube, is followed in the same manner but to a much less extent by the Fang. Soft portions of the outward tree are pulverised and mixed with oil into a thick paste, and the preparation smeared over the entire body. Occasionally a red band is painted across the forehead. When in mourning, dust, soot, or white clay is frequently rubbed over the entire body. Much more frequent is the practice of painting across breasts, hands, or chin. The pigment used is a dark blue colour, obtained I am told, from a tree fungus. The *Ngi* or witch doctor, when at work, in addition to his other paraphernalia smears his body with white chalk. Except in the case of the *Ngi*, the only object in decorating the body by painting is to appear *ndong* (beautiful), and with the Bube when asked the reason for smearing the body with red paint, they usually reply it is *ebong* (handsome). Imported pigments are not used for body decoration.

Tattooing.—The custom of tattooing is much in vogue. I have not been able

G: Bennett D-9 (no. 1998) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

[179] no climax may accurate teaching on the introduction, beyond the fact "we learnt it from our fathers." No ceremonies are connected with it. There are no professional tattooers, but the natives frequently employ a man known to be skilful to ornament them. It is practised by both sexes; young lads are anxious to be tattooed because it makes them feel "real men," but the practice is not indispensable as a sign of manhood. The same blue pigment obtained from a tree fungus used in painting is mixed with ashes and employed for tattooing. The instrument used is a sharp piece of bamboo, a piece of sharp iron or a knife. The practice does not appear to be in any way connected with pagan worship. Social or family rank does not affect the designs employed. Fang tattooing is not always symmetrical, is usually commenced with the face, and a favourite design on the cheeks somewhat resembles the bowl and stem of a straight pipe. Only one colour is employed. Tattoo marks and designs are mostly found on the face, chest, shoulders, arms and abdomen. Women frequently have the pipe pattern or a band across the cheeks, and occasionally upon the breasts.

Cicatrization is largely practised. Small incisions are made in the skin with a sharp instrument, frequently a steel nail from an imported packing case obtained from the trade boxes, the nail being flattened out into a small knife blade; or a sharp piece of bamboo is used. The juice of a certain herb is rubbed into the incised wounds.

IV.—*Habitations.*

[182] The houses are built mostly of bark; beams and rafters are made from the strong branches of forest trees and bamboos; they are secured by bush rope. The entire structure rests on the ground. It is very rare to find a Fang house on poles, except near the coast. There is no regularity in size of houses, but the form and material used is common to all the tribe. The average Fang house or hut is a low dark building, 15 feet long by 10 wide, and with walls about 6 feet high; the roof might increase the height inside. Each family has a house; it is used, day and night, by all members of the family. Travellers usually occupy [185] the *okeng* (palaver house), and the headman finds them sleeping quarters at night. When the owner dies he is usually buried close to the house, and the [184] grave levelled off and soon obliterated. The houses comprising a town are built together, end to end. Towns consist of two rows of houses, with the main road passing between them. The *okeng* (palaver house) is built across one end of the main road. A large place is often composed of several towns or villages in line, [91] the limits of each village being marked by its palaver house, and having its own [92] headman. The Fang method of conveying information regarding the size of a place is by stating the number of palaver houses it contains. Stockades are frequently used at the entrance to a town, especially if the people have a palaver (tribal war) with a neighbouring tribe. The palaver houses and dwellings are also frequently stockaded. The natives often show considerable foresight and shrewdness by making use of the natural advantages of a position in selecting a site for their villages.

B: Bennett D-S (ca. 1898) 1899 F'899 Fang F'899

site for their villages. The houses can be readily taken down and erected elsewhere. The earth floor is often beaten very hard, no matting is used. The beds are made of bamboo poles resting upon end pieces, supported by four forked corner stakes. The bed is raised about one foot from the ground. In most houses are four beds, two at each end on opposite sides, having a log fire burning between, the smoke escaping through the thatch roof. The furniture is all movable, and consists of stools, camera bowls and boards, drinking gourds, fish nets, water gourds, various baskets and hanging bamboo shelves for drying fish and corn over the fire. Food, grass and powder horns are hung up on wooden hooks suspended by bush rope; these hooks are made by cutting a suitable branch from a young tree, having a strong crotch. No separate portion of the dwelling is set apart for sleeping or eating. There are no windows to a Fang house; at night one or more pieces of bark are used for a door. All the domestic arrangements are excessively filthy. Before fresh meats is unknown, everything is eaten, including entrails and skin of animals and fish. Before occupying a new house the witch doctor (nyengane) is usually called to perform the ceremony of propitiating the evil spirits (bayi spirits), and the *bieng Bieri* (fetish) is hung up and becomes the protecting fetish of the household. This fetish is hung up over the doorway outside. The houses are built entirely above ground, the roofs are made of split bamboo and covered with thatch made from the long tough blade of a swamp reed, or rush. This thatch makes a most excellent roof, and when well put on, it is able to withstand three years of the terrible rains which fall during the long wet season.

V.—*Navigation, Canoes, Nets, Fishing, Traps.*

The Fang use long narrow canoes. A suitable tree having been found is felled and trimmed, then hollowed out with the small native wedge. All the canoes are open and both sides of the canoe alike. The women use the same canoes as the men and paddle them very skilfully. War canoes are made large and strong, but are otherwise similar in construction to the canoes in daily use. A kind of lugger sail is used and the natives sail a thin canoe very close to the wind. The helm used is made of wood; it much resembles a large flat sugar scoop and is common among tribes along the west coast. This helm is used most skilfully and with great rapidity by both men and women. In paddling, no fulcrum whatever is used. The men and women either sit or kneel, grasping the paddle handle in the upper and lower thirds they plunge the blade deeply into the water, and force the canoe ahead with great rapidity. One man, woman, or a child steers, using an ordinary paddle; the time kept while paddling is excellent, and is usually kept by one man chanting a Fang song, not unlike a white sailor's shanty, the paddling taking on renewed vigour during the chorus. The sails are usually made now of imported trade cloth, but I have seen them made from the native bark cloth. Only one sail is used and the canoes are able to beat up well against the wind.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 F909 Fang F909

The mariner's compass is entirely unknown, and when I have shown one, it was always spoken of as "the white man's living fowl" (*nsisen fitiah*). The Fang shapes his course by his knowledge of the river banks; he never ventures more than three days' journey from his own town, and much dislikes the idea of losing sight of land; therefore he seldom, if ever, attempts it. Certain canoes belong to the headmen of the village, others to individuals. The canoes do not have houses; charms are frequently tied to the bow, to appease the water spirit, and frequently a traveller in a canoe will throw into the river at certain places he passes portions of his food to appease the local spirit which he believes dwells there. The place where this spirit dwells may be in some large tree or rock on the river bank. At night the canoes are hauled up on the river bank and usually left unprotected. Large war canoes, if painted, are occasionally covered with a few mats. No special portion of a canoe is set apart for a chief, he is usually seated near the bow. Watertight compartments for provisions are not provided, food and articles of trade being carried in high baskets. Upon arrival of a canoe from a neighbouring town, the visitors are frequently welcomed with shouts of joy; guns are fired and a dance given in the evening. I have seen canoes repaired by placing pieces of bark over the holes inside and outside, the bark being secured with small hard wood plugs. No arrangement is made to prevent leaking.

Hooks for fishing are skilfully made of bamboo, the bark is long, very sharp and notched on both sides. The hook is secured to the fishing-line with string made of pineapple fibre. Foreign-made fish-hooks are now largely used; these are much coveted, and considered a very staple article of trade.

Casting nets are used weighted with stones, iron, or lead, obtained in trade. The meshes are very fine and show much skilful and patient workmanship. A Fang will work well at anything which he can do while sitting in the palaver house. He can then work, smoke and talk; any work requiring much bodily exertion on his part or elsewhere is relegated to his wives. Fish traps are made of split bamboo and much resemble the lobster baskets used by our own fishermen. Small streams are often dammed at high water, the dam being made of split bamboo, fastened together with bush rope until a very large screen is made, 10 or 12 feet in height; this screen is staked across the stream at high water, when the tide falls the water passes readily through, leaving the fish in the river. The most disgusting sight among the Fang, is to see the women and children at low water walking in the mud, breast high, feeling for "mud fish." The large casting net is called *ewet*; a small round net used for dipping in pools and along the river bank at low water is called *ton*.

VI.—*Metallurgy, Fire, Machinery.*

Metallurgy among the Fang is limited to the working of iron. The native word for iron is *Ebi*. The Fang among whom I lived did not possess the knowledge of smelting, but I was told that "other Fang far away in the bush, especially the Ngui dwarfs), dug the *mimbah ebi* (stones of iron) out of the earth, melted it, and

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

traded with the *eki* (iron)." Iron is put to various uses. Long bladed knives of various shapes and patterns are made, also spear heads, armlets, anklets, finger and toe rings. Small pieces of iron are used for bullets in flint-lock muskets. One of the most important uses of money among the Fang is the making of *beki*. 325 326

Beki is made up in bunches ten *beki* in each bunch; a bunch of *beki* is called *ntet*. The amount of dowry paid in *beki* is usually counted in hundreds, *kuliki bi ki, ntet awom* (bring me one hundred *beki*). 326 [436]

A bundle of ten arrow heads is frequently used as an *ntet*.

A peculiar shaped adze is made of iron; it is used for working wood, especially hollowing trees intended for canoes.

Pieces of iron are forged into axe blades (*ovon*).

The *mfak* is a short handled spade made of iron, used for digging in the gardens.

The art of casting seems to be unknown.

The bellows (*akum*) used by Fang smiths are very ingenious (*specimen on table*). The feet are used to steady the bellows, whilst both hands work the goat skin covers and force air into the fire.

A block of iron is used for an anvil. Some of the natives are quite skilful at working iron. A Fang living near my residence often begged from me a round steel nail from a packing case. In a short time he would return with the nail transformed into a thin delicate knife or dagger, only the nailhead remaining intact. Very large fighting knife blades are made and beautifully fashioned, and ornamented with various punch marks.

I have never seen any native made wire. Imported brass wire is in great demand and mostly used as a continuous armlet. The coil usually reaches from wrist to elbow, and is considered extremely *mbung* (handsome), and kept highly polished. [439] [301]

Imported brass is obtained in trade and made into armlets, anklets, finger and toe rings. It is also used for ornamentation of guns.

Many of the natives are skilled workers of iron and fully aware of its value. I have never seen welding practised, but in working hot iron it is frequently plunged into cold water to make it *alert* (hard).

Fire.—In the far interior, fire is produced by friction, the simplest form of a drill being used, which is twisted rapidly between the hands. Along the rivers matches are obtained from the native traders, who bring up large quantities from the coast. The natives are always ready to trade for matches, which are again traded to interior tribes. Flints are only used on the hammer of the old flintlock musket imported for trade. Fires are almost constantly burning in the palaver houses. Two dry logs are kept constantly burning, they are placed end to end, when one log is nearly consumed it is replaced by another. 372 [439]

It is interesting to notice how the natives carry fire about. When on a journey in 1897 from Gross Batanga with a caravan to the Bulu country in the German sphere of influence, one of the men usually obtained a piece of burning 372 484

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

372 484 log from the last town where the caravan rested. This man kept the piece of wood burning by gently swinging it backward and forward, while marching along the path with his load. On one occasion I timed a native, and when we reached the next stopping place, after a three hours' tramp in the rain, the brand was still burning brightly, and it had been frequently passed from one end of the caravan to the other so that all who desired could light their pipes from it.

372 765 The Fang use fire in the ceremony of *going out of mourning*. I witnessed this ceremony once at Foulabifong. The widows of an old headman had put in the regular time of mourning and were now to be released. There were seven widows in all, three of middle age, and four young girls A small fire of leaves had been lighted in the centre of the street, and on each side of the fire stood several young men armed with switches. The widows wore a very slender loin cloth. At a given signal the widows rushed toward the fire and bounded through it, the young men switching them as they passed, but the switches were not used severely. Immediately after the switching, each widow seated herself on the ground holding a bunch of burning leaves under her feet, while a young man shaved their heads with a sharp trade knife. On inquiry regarding this ceremony, I obtained the [783] following information: Passing the fire *cleans* them after mourning (evidently considered a means of purification). Switching reminds the widows of their duty to the man who inherits them as his wives. Burning has two meanings: firstly, the pain caused is endured as a last act of mourning for the departed; second, it signifies that henceforth the widows walk a new path (enter upon a new life).

372 821 Fire has a place in Fang religion or belief. The sun is considered the *tata* (father) of all heat, and the original maker of all fire, whether by friction, matches, powder, or lightning. When a severe thunderstorm is at its height, the natives say of the lightning, "that the sun has hid his face and is shooting fire, because he is angry." The native word for sun is *jo*. Although the palaver house fire is kept burning, still, no special effort is made to keep it alight; should it go out, any person present is at liberty to rekindle it from newly produced fire.

VII.—*Customs.*

671 The Fang have no system of law, no judge or tribunal for punishment of crime. Theft, murder, offences against the person are all settled according to native custom.

628 691 Example: A Fang of the Esisis clan steals goods or a woman from a Fang of the Nge clan. The Nge who has been wronged does not go to the offender for settlement, he goes to another near town and shoots the first goat he sees in the street or if very angry, he may shoot a woman. The owner of the goat or woman demands of the Nge his reason for doing so. The Nge replies, "An Esisis" (giving the man's name) "has wronged me; I put the palaver (his offence) on you." The third party then goes to the Esisis and says, "An Nge" (giving the man's name) "has shot my goat (or woman) because you have made trouble with him; he has put your palaver (trouble) on me. You must pay me!" The original offender is

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

now responsible and liable to two parties; if he is reasonable they all meet and talk the palaver. If the palaver is serious, each party appoints his *ntol* (ambassador). The palaver is usually talked in the main street of the town, before all the representatives of the interested clans, and before all strangers in town. The Fang are born orators, and remarkable gestures and orations are made while talking the palaver. The speaker usually walks backwards and forwards grasping and leaning upon a "palaver stick." He commences with: *M'zona* (I say thus); when speaking for another he says *A'zona* (he says thus); when speaking for the people of his town, *Ba zona* (they say thus). Sometimes the *ntôls* (ambassadors) sit in a canoe in the middle of a river or a stream, and talk the palaver, the injured parties being on either side of the stream. The case is talked, the goods demanded in payment stated, and an effort made to *kik nsang* (cut or end the palaver). If they succeed, then the palaver is *cut* (ended), and a dance follows; if no agreement is come to, the meeting breaks up and a tribal war exists between these clans.

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Salutations.

There are three salutations common to all. Two friends meet, they each grasp the arm of the other, high up on the biceps; a slight pause is made, then the hand is slipped down to clasp the wrist. This is also the customary salutation used by the Bulu.

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Two friends meeting salute by embracing.

A traveller entering the *abeng* (palaver house) walks over to the headman and sits on his knee a moment, at the same time placing one arm around the headman's neck.

Hospitality demands that all strangers be served food by the town women to strangers in the *abeng*.

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Wives are loaned to guests.

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Coarse conversation is indulged in by old and young of both sexes.

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Considerable license prevails among the unmarried; less so among the married.

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VIII.—*Invention, Natural Forms, Conservatism.*

Invention.—The arts in use are common to all the different clans of the great Fang tribe. Any new discovery as the working of iron is credited to the dwarfs or *nqui*. The natives are always ready to admit that the *nqui* are very clever; they have a saying "no person knows like a *mon nqui* (dwarf) what is inside the forest." When obtainable the natives use an imported saw, or file, and admit its superiority over their own crude tools. A Fang may be impressed at the knowledge and power of the white man, but is not greatly surprised; the reason for this is that many white men are credited with possessing supernatural powers.

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Some of the clubs, tools and weapons approximate to the natural forms of the branches or roots of trees. Axe handles and the handle of a certain kind of adze have

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8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

the natural curve of the branches. Stones are employed for rolling food, especially for crushing and rolling the *ngon* seed. Shells of large land mollusca are cut in half and used for spoons, small gourds being used for the same purpose. Large gourds are used for water dippers and bottles. Very many uses are found for the forest gourds, not the least ingenious being the use of a hollow stemmed gourd for administering a rectal injection. Gourds are used for the sounding boards of the musical instrument called *mvuk*. The people find many uses for bamboo. It is used in construction of houses, fish baskets and traps are made from it, fences to protect paths during tribal wars are made of sharp pointed bamboo poles; and small sharpened pieces of bamboo with poisoned tips are buried in the forest paths, point upward, to wound and poison the naked feet of an unsuspecting enemy. The teeth and claws of leopards and bush cats, elephant tail, antelope feet, horns and forest beans are used in their natural form as personal ornaments. Leopard teeth are always considered valuable as *biang* (fetish) and are much sought after; they are frequently imitated in ivory. I have not seen the defences of animals employed as artificial defences, except as fetish. Long tough forest thorns are often used as awls and needles for piercing and sewing skins. I once saw an *ngangan* (witch doctor) perform a post-mortem examination on a woman. After he had discovered the cause of death, which he announced to the expectant crowd as being due to "six witches eating her liver," he first pierced the abdominal walls with a long hard thorn, and then sewed up the body with a bamboo needle threaded with pineapple fibre. I have seen only one cave dwelling; it was used by an isolated sufferer of the dread disease called by the natives *mabata* (a kind of sloughing phagedina). When proper reed material for making thatch is scarce, large forest leaves are used, but they make very poor roofs, especially during the tornado season.

Conservatism.—The Fang are not quick to adopt reforms or to introduce new methods; they are more or less the slaves of custom, and have a superstitious dread of departing from ancestral habits. This refers to all the proceedings of life. Fang living in towns near Gaboon are almost daily coming in contact with white settlers, and to some extent, at least, appear to be changing their mode of living. It never appeared to me that a Fang had the same longing to be "just like a white man" as possesses the young Mpôngwe and Benga men.

IX.—*Ornamentation.*

The patterns mostly seen in Fang ornamentation consist of bands, incised lines, elliptical punch marks, herring bone, lozenge pattern and cross lines. The natives do not possess a natural aptitude for drawing, and seldom attempt it. The few drawings I have seen on the bark walls of houses, supposed to represent men and women, were very crude and exaggerated in proportion. They have no idea whatever of perspective. They seem to interpret foreign drawings very readily. The Fang show considerable skill in plain wood carving, using an ordinary native knife. I have noticed that their carving improves very considerably when an imported pocket knife is the instrument employed.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

X.—*Food. Cooking.*

Food used by the Fang is precisely similar to that of all other tribes inhabiting the great zone of palms and bananas as described by Humboldt. Added to these ordinary foods of the Fang is their liking for human flesh, indulged in to this day in spite of the law, which is often powerless to reach and punish the offenders. Cassava, *mbôe*, plantains, *bikon*, crushed gourd seeds, *ngongon*, corn; *mekobe*, a most nutritive tuber, sweet potatoes, yams, palm oil, bananas, snails and various molluscs. Fish is wrapped in plantain leaves and boiled, or set on hot ashes and fire piled on top of the *bundle* of food. All kinds of meat is eaten, from deer down to the smallest bush rat; snakes are considered very good meat. No portion is wasted, every morsel of skin and intestines are eaten. Goats and chickens are raised for food and trade. Corn or other cereals are not used for the purpose of making bread. Milk is not used. Preparations of milk such as butter and cheese are not made. There is a marked preference for meats. When an animal is slaughtered, women bring wooden bowls to collect the blood in. The blood is often cooked mixed with palm oil. A Fang will eat almost any kind of known food and at any time, providing it is not his *Ekí* or taboo, given him during infancy, prohibiting the eating of a certain kind of food, unless partaken of under certain conditions. Except for the *Ekí* men, women and children partake of the same food. The Fang are improvident. When on long journeys they often chew a piece of Kola nut, but more commonly chew pieces of a certain root; it has several different names. Palm oil is extensively used in cooking. Salt (*nkú*) is much enjoyed and sought after in trade. Sugar is only used in the form of sugar cane and eaten uncooked. The chiefs, or rather headmen, have no special form of food. Eating earth is not indulged in. So far as I am aware, all fish, flesh and fowl is cooked before being eaten. Flesh is often extremely high, at times positively bad, before it is eaten, but not one morsel is ever wasted.

Fish, fowl, bush rats, snakes and all kinds of meats are smoked or sun-dried; food prepared thus is carried on journeys in the bush wrapped in leaves and eaten with *mbôe* (cassava) without any further preparation. Permanent ovens for baking are not in use. Meat is roasted on small spits over the log fire or wrapped up in leaves and hot ashes banked around and on top of it. Native vegetables are frequently cooked with meats, plantains are usually boiled separately or roasted close to the fire. Most cooking utensils used by the Fang near the coast are iron or brass pots, imported by white traders; but farther inland the native pots are much more in vogue. These native pots are made of grey clay and sun-dried; they become harder and stronger by use, and vary in size and capacity from a pint to about three gallons.

Cooking vessels are not kept very clean, being simply rinsed out with a little water; but if the vessel is a brass trade pot or kettle, it is usually taken to the river or a near stream, and scoured bright; but I fear the chief reason for doing

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

this is, because, to a Fang eye, polished brass looks *mbumy* (handsome) and is attractive for trade. Vessels are usually placed on top of the fire and not suspended over it; vegetables are frequently placed in stews. No separate dwelling house exists for cooking, it is carried on in the dwelling house. The water used to wash a dirty pot with is often thrown out on the earth floor of the dwelling, children playing in the wet dirt. In all domestic matters the Fang are very filthy. I have on more than one occasion when inside a native hut seen children micturate and defecate on the earth floor close to where the mother was cooking, the women and men present taking very little notice, and only occasionally placing the child outside the door. Cooking is exclusively the duty of women, a *real man* will not cook. Food is often highly seasoned with hot native red and green peppers, and food thus prepared is much appreciated. The food is usually well cooked through, with the exception of plantains which are often only half boiled and served quite hard. Large round stones are used for rubbing and reducing to powder gourd seeds and various tubers. Smoking and salting are the only methods practised for preserving food, and on account of the value of salt and the difficulty of transporting it inland, it is seldom thus employed.

Drinks.—Rum has been carried from the coast by white traders and natives far inland and is used whenever obtainable, but the chief drink is cold water. Palm wine is made called *meyak*. Except in places where a trade factory existed I have seen very few cases of intoxication among the Fang, but when they can obtain rum it seems to completely demoralize them. Tea and coffee are known to people living near white settlers. When a party of headmen and others have taken a meal at the mission house, tea and coffee were greatly enjoyed and cups frequently re-filled. The first meal is usually about eight or nine o'clock; the natives think the white man eats very early; a mid-day meal is served and the evening repast is usually about sunset.

Food is frequently brought to the men inside the *abeng* (palaver house); at other times an entire family eats together inside the dwelling house. No ceremonies whatever precede the commencement of meals. When a son is born, or on the occasion of a wedding, and after some large palaver has been settled, a feast is usually given. Invited guests and strangers partake together with the town folk of the food prepared; it is usually served on the earth floor of the palaver house, on plantain leaves, and in cooking pots, each person helping himself. The women do not eat with the men inside the palaver house.

Mode of preparing Mboa.

Ba du mbóa osui, e vóm a ne ndâtâl: a kaga boma mêlu mêla, be keli tâs: be sâli ne nye: be ndâ mbûk: be kêzi nye mbûk iti be nou ntum: beña tyûk: bènga vul: be kaga mana vul: be kêzi nye ê mvê: evkoba ji: ve telê mvè mboa: wena mboa abea.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

Translation.

They put cassava to soak in the river, in a place where there is (plenty of) mud. When it has lain there three days, they go and rub off the rind. They bring it (to the house). They take a trough, and put the cassava in it. They take the mashing stick. They mash the cassava. They wrap it up (in leaves). When they have finished that, they put it in the pot. Then they light the fire. They put the pot of iguma (on the fire). Then the iguma is *boiled*.

Axo Mfini: (Plantation).

Betata basa leua bo dia inifini (our fathers did not make plantain villages), *n'afan eto bè* (because their land was near at hand, *i.e.*, near the regular village). *Fañ b'anyege infini ne bo bidji binne* (Fañ likes plantain village to make good food, *i.e.*, because thus they get good food). *Bikon e djel ine, betok* (Plantains in town have (one) small). *Infini O ne djal moe afan bibè* (Plantain village is a good town (because) land (*i.e.*, good land) near). *Nson ane afan betata benga to bibè* (Like the land where the fathers were near). *B'angége infini, ne dzi bidji binné. Mo'mbok a gouevi bayit: bevok benga sôm* (They like the plantain village (because) there they eat good food. One person kills game (meat) others buy). *Menda infini me vie bo abé* (Houses of plantain villages soon spoil).[1] *Fañ, Ba'djí asas mbôa kidiase* (Fañ they eat a meal of cassava in the morning).

Regarding the *Eki* tabooing certain foods or performance of certain actions as in vogue among the Fang, I learned from a friend and *confrère*, Rev. R. H. Nassau, D.D., M.D., of Gaboon, that the *Eki* of the Fang is precisely similar to the *Orunda* of the Mpôngwe. Dr. Nassau is a veteran missionary of thirty-seven years' African experience, and he is always ready to help others who are sufficiently interested in the natives to inquire about them. I know of no one on the West Coast more willing or eminently able than he for imparting information regarding the people among whom he has laboured.

XI.—*Anthropophagy.*

Cannibalism prevails among the Fang beyond question, and only fear of the law keeps him somewhat in check. I am able to speak of the Fang as anthropophagi; not alone from information gathered, but from having once had the opportunity of visiting a town two days after a victim had been killed and eaten.

This town, named Olunda, is on the right bank of the Nkomo river, about 60 miles from the seat of government in the Congo Français. Whilst visiting the town Nenge-nenge (the island of islands) in the autumn of 1898, a native trader named Arkendengi, employed by a British trading house at Gaboon, informed me

[1] It is very true that houses having plantains growing near, soon rot; this is due to the dampness caused by loss of sunlight and heat

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

266 114 that a man had been killed and eaten only two days before at the town of Olunda two miles below Nenge-nenge. Old king Kelun at Nenge-nenge confirmed the report, and in compliance with my request, loaned me an interpreter to accompany me to the place.

The tide being favourable, I decided to start without telling my boat boys the reason for my hasty departure. Olunda is quite close to the river bank, but upon our arrival the water had fallen so low that the only way to reach the town was by wading knee deep in mud up the bank. The people eyed our boat and myself in particular with marked suspicion, and much talking was indulged in during our landing. The headman was the most villainous looking specimen of a Fang I have ever met; he was well built and very muscular, but his face was extremely ugly and brute-like: he had only one eye, and an evil-looking one it was. He wore on his head an old red worsted trade cap, and smoked a dirty native clay pipe.

The object of my visit was well hidden, and we chatted on various matters in the palaver house. When I expressed a desire to walk through the town and treat any of his sick people, the headman said, "No sick here, people all away, let us talk in the *abeng*" (palaver house). However, without giving him any notice I presently left the palaver house and walked out into the main road, and the crowd followed. The headman repeatedly assured me that the town was not worth seeing; but I strolled leisurely along. Half-way through the town I noticed a quantity of intestines strung out to dry on sticks, and to the great annoyance of the headman and people, I made an examination of them which convinced me that they had been removed quite recently from a human body. I was assured that thay were *entrails from a deer* and were being dried for the purpose of covering gourds to hold gunpowder. I then told the people the reports I had heard, also that I knew the intestines then drying were human, and accused them of cannibalism. They were very indignant, and declared, as all Fangs do, that their tribe never eat men. "Oh no, people in the far bush did, only bad Fang did so." A few moments later I picked up a human clavicle in the palaver house and took it away with me, threatening to report the matter to the Government.

In the palaver house of this same town was a boy of about sixteen years, in [727] chains, held as a hostage. I arranged to return in a few days and try to bring the lad to our mission station, but upon my return I again stopped at Nengi-Nengi, and then heard that the boy had been killed and eaten shortly after my departure.

266 I am inclined to believe that the reason for eating human flesh by the Fang is the result of a craving for animal food. The victims are generally males captured either in war, or members of other tribes waylaid and killed while journeying in the bush.

A Fang man told me that once he ate "some man" because he was persuaded to, and that it "passed goat far" (much superior to goat). He added, "I never do

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

so now because I known it's wrong." His latter statement I gave very little credit to. 266

Fang who admitted to me that "bad Fang eat men, but not the people of their town or tribe," asserted that all parts of the body are eaten; that the victims are not considered as sacrifices to any gods, but that the bones are used for *biang* (medicine).

Human flesh does not form part of the regular food of the people, and to a certain extent the natives seem ashamed to admit that "other Fang eat men"; they never admitted to me that any of *their tribe* did so.

XII.—*Religion, Fetish or Biang (medicine).*

These anthropophagi have some idea of God, a superior being, their *Tata* (father) *a bo mam mesese* (he made all things). *Anyambi* is their *tata* and ranks above all other Fang gods, because *a'ne yôp* (he is above, *lit.* lives in heaven). The Fang have other or minor gods, the greatest of whom was *Sekôme*, and many Fang say *Sekôme* and *Anyambi* are one and the same god; hence the saying "*Sekôme anga kôm mam mesese*" (Sekôme he made (arranged) all things). The following is a list of Fang minor gods: 776

Nzame.
Mabeka.
Nkwa.
Sekôme (reported as being Anyambi).
Ube.
Nzame begat Mabeka.
Mabeka begat Nkwa.
Nkwa begat Sekôme.
Sekôme begat Ube.

The Fang have no religion in the generally accepted meaning of the word, for it is mostly made up of an unlimited and disconnected chain of superstitious beliefs. [771]

The key-note of the superstitious beliefs of the Fang is that the Present and Future is filled with innumerable numbers of spiritual beings. The great spirit *Tata* (father) *Anyambi* or *Sekôme* is considered indifferent to the wants and sufferings of men, women and children. I do not believe that worship is directed in any way whatever to the spirits of Present and Future, the natives seeming rather to consider propitiation, exhortation and supplication as the three things most essential and necessary. The spirits of Present and Future possess to a large degree the better human passions, and also the baser ones. The origin of these innumerable spirits of Present and Future is extremely vague: *Anyambi* or *Sekôme* is credited with having created many; others are the souls of dead relatives, still retaining after death human sensations and desires. The Fang have the same

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

776 ideas as the Bulu regarding two great gods. The *Zambe* of the Bulu is the *Anyambi* or *Sekôme* of the Fang, the *tata* or father of all things; and another god of less power than *Anyambi* or *Sekôme*, who lives in the forests and is so tall that he gathers fruit from the highest trees. Some of the old men and women profess to have seen this god of the forests.

[775] Fang superstition includes transmigration; a departed human soul may enter any animal dwelling on top of the earth or in it. There are spirits of health and disease, also a protecting spirit belonging to a clan or tribe, in whose honour a small basket is hung in the palaver house, containing portions of the skull of an albino, whenever obtainable, also portions of the skulls of a relative and a chimpanzee, human hair, nails and bones. This fetish or *biang* is called the *Biang Akumayong*. Most Fang have a cabalistic word assigned to them by the *ngangan* (witch doctor), and this word is used as a prayer. During the new moon, dances are nearly always indulged in, and the songs usually addressed to the spirits of Present and Future. Local spirits need constant propitiation; a native passing in his canoe a spot where a local spirit dwells, as a large rock, will pay his respects by casting a piece of his food into the river, or when in the forest a few stones or a piece of *mbôa* (cassava) is laid at the root of some great tree.

772 776 [535]

778 Wooden idols are not plentiful among the Fang tribes living along the rivers; they are seen more in the palaver houses of the bush towns.

Charms.—These may be only cabalistic words, and under this head of vocal charms must be included the incantations of the *ngangan* (witch doctor).

Material charms.—These are by far the most common; the belief in material charms, fetish, occupies the most prominent place in Fang religious contemplation.

Among the Fang, the English word Fetish, from the Portuguese word Feticio, is *Biang* (medicine). A Fang fetish is any material object which the *ngangan* (doctor) has consecrated and made a fit abiding place for a spirit. What may be consecrated? Anything, absolutely anything; a shell, rag, stone, twig of a tree, horns, nails, etc. The horns of small antelope and large deer are filled with resins, nails, human hair, faeces, etc. To bewitch a person it is necessary to give the *ngangan* a piece of the hair, nail, a portion of the food or a drop of blood of the person to be bewitched. A Fang is most careful if he cuts himself to see that only friends and relations approach him until the bleeding has ceased, and hair when cut is usually burnt without delay. As mentioned in the section of this paper on food, every child during infancy is subjected to certain rites which constitute his or her *Ebi*, prohibiting the child from eating a certain kind of food or performing a certain act. Thus far, the superstitious beliefs of the Fang and Bulu are precisely similar, and I gathered from Dr. Nassau at Gaboon many facts connected with the people among whom he laboured, the Mpongwe, which showed that they also held superstitious beliefs very nearly, and in some cases precisely similar to those of the Bulu and Fang, the only difference being in the

[754] [826] 784 778 [771]

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

name, the *Eki* of the Fang being the *Orunda* of the Mpongwe. One day when on a journey among the people, I asked an old headman to share with me a chicken my boy had prepared for supper; the old man seemed pleased at my invitation, but asked the boy if it was a hen or cock fowl. Upon being informed that it was a cock, he declined to eat any of it that was his *Eki*. As previously stated, I do not believe the natives worship the spirits of Present and Future, but to a certain degree ancestral worship does exist. A Fang places the skull of his father in a curious receptacle of bark, worshipping it, killing fowls and making blood offerings to it, and in many ways the whole matter somewhat resembles the worshipping at graves and before ancestral tablets as practised in China. The natives often pray to their father's skull before talking a large war palaver, or the purchase of a new woman. As worshipping departed ancestors is the chief duty of a faithful Chinaman, so making offerings and prayers to the departed father's spirit before the skull constitutes the great Fang fetish, or *bieti*. Wooden idols, *biyeme*, of men and women are made in a manner which makes the sex extremely apparent; yet whenever I have seen these figures in towns, the people did not seem to regard them as obscene, but as truthful representations of the sexes. I feel sure that to some extent, at least, phallic worship is practised among the Fang. Spirits are everywhere; in rocks, trees, forests, and streams; in fact, for the Fang, this life is one continual fight against spirits corporal and spiritual.

A peculiar belief regarding dreams is that when a person sleeps the soul often wanders away, and its experiences on these journeys are made known to the sleeper by dreams. After death the soul may inhabit any kind of animal.

Fetish Biang (medicine).—Fetish means anything; leopard teeth, human finger nails, hair, wood, iron, herbs. The article used as *biang* or fetish, has no intrinsic value, it is only valued because of connecting its owner with a spirit which can aid him. The leopard tooth fetish is supposed to impart the bravery of the leopard to its owner. Fetish is a spirit or combination of spirits manifested in material things.

Dili Mkuk.—To murder a person and save his skull as a fetish, or use the skull as medicine to bring women, guns, goats or goods. The people will make offerings to the skulls calling them by the names of persons killed. It is said that these prayers are always answered as desired.

Biang é Soli (hiding medicine).—A man goes and takes leaves of trees, and cuts them up. He says, "I have cut up leaves of trees" (or high grass, bushes). The women shell gourd seeds and mash them. They catch a fowl, kill it, and put it in the pot. They also put in the pot the medicine leaves, and the mashed gourd kernels. They put the pot on the fire, and boil (its contents). When they have boiled it, the medicine is cooked. They take the medicine pot off (the fire). They go and put it by the side of (*afua*) the back of the *bieti*. The man who has put it there says to the *bieti*, other people want to kill me. He takes away the medicine pot. He opens the *bieti* basket. He takes a small piece of the bone (instead of this say to the woman and children he takes the excrement of the

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

789 *bieti*). He brings it. He eats the fowl. When finished, he takes a bone of the fowl and the excrement of the *bieti*. He cuts his nails and his hair. He ties (all these things) up in a bundle or packs them inside the horn of a small deer and keeps it.

When a man goes on a journey he carries this medicine with him. Another person cannot see him as he journeys.

This is the *Biang e Soli*.

Biang-nkama.—The people get up and take machetes and cut a clearing. When they have finished the clearing is open and bright. If a man has died and been long in the grave, they take his bones, and lay them out on the ground. They cover them over with earth. They take other bones, and cut them up into small pieces. They put (these pieces) in a basket: they put in also red dye, and scrapings from the bark of trees. They close up the basket. If they go to war, they carry the basket (suspended by a cord from) the shoulder. They take the red dye which is in the basket and smear the body with it. If an enemy (literally, a person) [726] fires a gun (at them), they will not be pierced (by the pieces of iron pot used as bullets).

This is the *Biang-nkama*. Do not tell it to women or children; only to grown real men—for it is tabooed.

Nzake Bukun.—Fang make it thus. If a man makes witch medicine, he kills 754 his brother and other people. They say, let us make *nzake bukun*. They take a corpse, and go with it to the bush. They cut bush. The bush is clear and open. They sweep clear the place which they have cut. They lay down the corpse in the place which they have swept. They dig plenty of dirt, and make it in the shape of an elephant (over the corpse). They make the trunk, the tusks, the eyes, the legs, the tail, the ears. They finish and return to the town. They say, we have made *nzake bukun* (*nzake* means elephant). They say if a man goes out to kill by witchcraft, he will die. If a man wishes to kill another with poison, he will die. If a man lies with a woman in the daytime he will die. Let not a woman eat a pig. And so they say, they have made this fetish, the *nzake-bukun*. When they have done so, if a man lies with a woman in the daytime he gets sick. They go and scrape trees in the bush; they bring water from the river, and put the scrapings in the water. They catch a fowl outside and put it in the medicine-water. They touch the man's body over with the fowl. And so that man, they heal him from his fetish-sickness. Then he is well.

This is *Nzake bukun*.

Biang-abationg.—If a man has married two or three women, and loves one, but 832 dislikes the others, the latter feel badly. They make *biang abationg*. When they [514] go to pass their faeces, they take a very small piece of their faeces. They rub off the grease from their skin, and mix this grease with the small piece of dung. They put it (the mixture) on the drying-shelf (over the fire). When it is dry they mash it to powder, and put it in the neck of a gourd. They take also a shrub called *abatoñ* (known only by women) and put it in a small gourd (not the neck of

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

gourd mentioned above). They put oil in it. They keep it hidden. No one else is allowed to see it. 832

When the woman cooks food for her husband, she takes the medicine, which she puts in the neck of the gourd, and puts it in her husband's food, then his heart is changed. In the evening the woman smears herself with the *abatoŋ*, which she had put in the small gourd. When she and her husband lie down, if she touches her husband, the medicine which she has eaten makes his heart change. Though he liked her before, now he loves her on account of the *biang-abationg*.

This is the *Biang-abationg*.

Biang-mikal (adultery medicine).—People go and scrape medicine in the bush. If they come with the medicine, they put it in the pot. They put water in the pot. They go and catch a fowl. They cut the fowl's neck; they put the blood in the medicine with the scrapings from trees. They take medicine that is in the water, they pour it on the person's head. They also take a certain medicine called *ngwcia* and rub it on the face of the sick person. They again rub it on his belly. Then they have cured the person of the *minkal*. The fowl used is not to be eaten by the sick person, others may do so. Then he is healed. 837 755 695

This is the same medicine used to detect adultery. If a person commits adultery with another man's wife, and then speaks a lie denying the affair, the person accused must drink the *biang-mikal* to show the people he is innocent. If he is guilty the medicine makes him sick, and he dies or trouble comes to his people. If guilty, medicine is made to call the curse back. 837 795

This is the *Biang-mikal*.

Biang-ndona (medicine for young men, eloping medicine).—If a person goes on a journey and sees a virgin, he courts or loves her. Then the virgin accepts him. He and she go and lie down. The young man says, "Let us go in my town." If the virgin does not accept, then the young man tries to persuade her. The virgin says, "I go later." The young man says, "If you go later, give me hair for a souvenir." Then the virgin scratches over her heart. She takes the hair of her head and the blood from the scratch over her heart and gives it to the young man. He goes to his town, he says, "I'll first make medicine." He takes the hair and the blood. He takes a small piece of witch medicine. He also takes plenty of leaves. He puts the small piece of witch medicine with the leaves. The hair and the blood he also puts in the leaves. He mixes all in the leaves. He hangs them in the *bieti* basket. He says, "*Bieti*, I want to marry a woman. Take her for me." This eloping medicine hangs one day. In the morning he cuts medicine and puts it on top of a tree. He leaves the medicine on top of the tree. He goes again to the young virgin. He says, "I have come, I come to take you." The young virgin says, "I will go to-morrow." He sleeps. The young man when day breaks says, "Let us go." The young virgin says, "I will surely go." Then the young man elopes with the young virgin; he comes with her to his town. Father of the young virgin he comes vexed. The young man kills a goat for the father of the young virgin. They finish eating the goat. He (the father) sleeps one day. Next morning the young man 584 832 583

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

832 584 583 gives him (the father) the *beki* (dowry). The father of the young virgin takes the goods to his town; the young man remains in possession of the woman.

They marry with *biang-ndoma*, eloping medicine thus.

This is *Biang-ndoma*.

Biang-akong (war medicine).—Told me by Fam-deu, a Fang, Esisis clan, at 721 789 Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 19th, 1898. This *biang* was illustrated to me; a leopard tooth is the *Biang-akong*.

Make a bowl of war medicine, of leaves, roots, and bark. Call all people of the town. Drop the leopard tooth into the medicine. If the point of the tooth *looks* toward the people we have a palaver (trouble) with, then we must go and fight and we will win. If the root of the tooth points toward the people we have a palaver with, then we must *tabe si* (sit down) or our enemies will win if we go to fight them.

This is the *Biang-akong*.

789 *Biang-akamayong*.—This *biang* is the protector of the tribe or nation (*ayóng*, tribe).

619 622 Told me by Esôya-ôvum, the headman of Foulabifong on the Nkomo river, who sold me the complete set of the *Biang-akamayong* belonging to the dead headman "Commisan." I present this *biang* for your inspection this evening. The tin canister was obtained from a white man and is used in place of the usual basket to carry bones in. It contains portions of the skull of an albino (male), portions of the skull of a *mon nguri*, young chimpanzee, red powder and a variety of native medicine.

[726] [534] This *biang-akamayong* is always carried by the headman of a town during war. A bell hangs from the bottom of the canister containing the bones; it rings when the headman walks.

Nka.—The small horn belonging to the *biang-akamayong* has *ngom* (porcupine tail) in it, also native medicine. It is used to cure people having witches. A bowl of medicine is made. The *ngom* is dipped in the medicine bowl and the sick person sprinkled with the medicine. Then the witch departs.

At this point the headman Esôya stopped talking. He said, "The children who have gathered around your house must go away; no real man dare talk about the *biang-akamayong* before women and children." I told the children to go and Esôya continued.

The whistle.—This is part of the *biang-akamayong*; it has been cooked (boiled) in the medicine bowl and has great power when used by the headman in calling the men together after a fight.

Mouf.—This is the large horn with a piece of looking glass on top. This horn 789 619 contains much medicine, and next to the bones is the most important part of the *biang-akamayong*.

The two small antelope horns, and the small bundles of medicine, are *biang e seli* (hiding medicine); it makes the person carrying the *biang-akamayong* invisible to the enemy.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

The skin of a bush cat is part of the *biang-akamayong* called "Nain." 789

The Mvang.—A triangular piece of iron filled with medicine, used to keep away witches, is also part of the *biang-akamayong.* 619

Biang-akong or *biang-abal* (war medicine).—This is also part of the *biang-akamayong*, and the shots from the guns of an enemy are of no avail.

One other important fetish hangs with the *biang-akamayong.*

A piece of very hard wood. Only a certain kind of woman is selected to find this wood; she is called a special or *selected* woman on account of certain peculiarities connected with her, *e.g.*, she always fails to catch fish, she may try all day but will not succeed in catching fish. The husband of such a woman, after intercourse with her, fails to catch fish the next day, he also fails to work. This is the kind of woman always selected to find this wood; it is hard wood, she is a hard woman, and she is called *Emunega ane alert* (the woman who is hard). This medicine is also called *biang-akong*, and shot from the guns of an enemy will not harm. [177] [824]

This is the *Biang-akamayong.*

XIII.—*Witchcraft. Evus.* (*Witch.*)

If a person goes out to make witch (witch medicine, or play witch to harm others) he dies. The people take him to the backyard. Other people say, "We want to take the witch." If the corpse is a female, they open the belly. If the corpse is a male, they open the heart. They see the witch, they take it. If they bring the witch, they lay it on the smoke shelf. It dries. When finished drying they say, "We will use it as medicine." 754

This is *Evus* (witch).

Cursing dead Relations.—Written at Foulabifong, Nkomo river, April 13th, 1898. Told me by Ôvôn; fully confirmed by Ogandaga and Interpreter Roby.

E'kunesong (to curse dead relations).—This is a Fang custom. A man has a palaver with another, or goods stolen. He desires to get even with the thief. He calls a friend and curses his friend's dead relations, saying. 754 578

"Go and kill that person for me, or go and make him pay me goods; if you do so, I will then pay you for having cursed your dead relations." It is a serious matter to have dead relations cursed, and the friend feels very bad. He must do as bid, or he is branded as a coward, and after he has completed his task he then makes claim for payment. 626

Nge me bā jam dili, nge me ta minbin (If I do it, may I see the corpses [of my people]). A Fang way of swearing an oath. [539

Ami ye mimbim mia, yinga me bat (My friend, by the corpses of your relations, kill those people for me).

Notes on *Ebômada* (a curse).

Ilong s'ayoge (a curse that kills).

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

754 *Vazege me ɨlong onga lóm me* (Take away the curse you have [sent] put
578 upon me).
626 *Vazege me bibomeda* (Take away the curse).
539 *Vazege me biyoge* (Take away the curse).
Bót bene mbómeda ɛb Anyambe edjam é mam mɛbɛ móa (People are cursed of God on account of their sins).

XIV.—*The Ngi.* (*A Fang Secret Society.*)

575 To members (*Bemvon*) the following things or *bityi* are forbidden :—
Bityi :—

1. To go and make or play at witch (make *evus*).
2. A male fowl is not to be eaten (shared) by two men of different clans.
3. Fish called *ngole* must not be partaken of with a woman.
4. Only the initiated are permitted to eat the fish called *ngone*.
5. Only the initiated may witness the Ngi dances. A woman who attempts to witness an Ngi dance will sicken and die.
6. Only the initiated must know about the bones used by Ngi.
7. A member of the Ngi society is not permitted to sleep on his back.
8. Food refuse must not be destroyed by fire.
9. To spit in the fire is against the law of Ngi (not permitted).
10. An uninitiated person will die if embraced by an Ngi.
11. To kick over rotten wood, logs, or forest stumps, is forbidden.
12. To cut a stick half through in the bush, and then bring it to town and break it, is forbidden. It must be cut through and the two pieces carried.
13. To kick the feet together after getting in bed, for the purpose of removing dust, is forbidden.

The violation of any of these mentioned *bityi* will bring misfortune and death on the *bemvon* (member).

Ngi means gorilla among the Fang; Nji means gorilla among the Bulu. The Bulu have the Nji secret society, which is reported as being precisely similar to the Fang Ngi; it came to the Bulu from the Fang.

XV.—*War.*

726 During a tribal war all adults act as warriors. There is no regular organisation
[18] of fighting men. It is a typical guerilla warfare. Parties of young men go forth at night to attack towns; others watch the forest paths to shoot men passing and women going to work in the gardens. The Fang are noted for their love of war; they are the most warlike people in all West Africa. When a tribal war is on, a headman frequently goes out with a raiding party to attack the town; he carries with him the *biang-akamayong* (protecting medicine of the tribe). The usual mode of attack is as follows: Having decided to attack a town, the party of men (usually ten or

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

fifteen) take their flint-lock muskets, heavily loaded with trade powder and a handful of broken iron pot (iron trade pots) or small stones, and creep up close to the town after dark. Two men try to enter the town unobserved; if they succeed, then they knock at the door of a hut and say, "We are strangers travelling; give us fire and food." Directly a person inside the house opens the door, both men discharge their guns into the house, and immediately run for the bush toward their comrades. The whole town is soon in pursuit, and unless careful they run into an ambuscade prepared for them. A fight may occur, but more often the attacking party return to their town in triumph, shouting: "We are real men, we are real men, we have been to town, we have shot a man (or woman), we are men —real men." There is great rejoicing in their town, and a dance follows. If the palaver is a serious one, the town is often stockaded with split logs placed vertically in the ground; huts are likewise stockaded. Poisoned bamboo spikes are buried in the forest paths to wound the feet of an enemy. The weapons used and relied on to-day are flint-lock muskets. Spears are rapidly falling into disuse. The cross-bow is only used for shooting birds and small bush cats. It is a mistaken idea that the arrows used with the cross-bow are poisoned. Shields are not used. The chief causes of war are disputes over women, hence called "women palavers," and these feuds may last for years. Prisoners are often permitted to starve to death, and are occasionally killed and eaten. Owing to a bitter feud it is often impossible for the women to work in the gardens or fish on the river, the consequence being a great scarcity of food. In Foulabifeng, where I resided, a woman palaver lasted over ten months, and the three adjoining towns were in a state of famine. A prisoner was nearly starved to death, and I had to repeatedly plead for him. During these feuds many women are shot while walking the paths. The Fang think it quite correct to shoot a woman; they say, "It is always *safe* to shoot a woman because she cannot shoot back." Prisoners are frequently exchanged, others are held as hostages.

726 712 726 [411] 721 727 [726] [562]

Abal (war). Translation.

If people are going to war they go in crowds. If they approach near the town (of the enemy) they hold a council. An old man (one) he says thus: We will go to fire when? Then the others say, We will go in the night. Then they stay (sit) there until night. Darkness comes, and they light a torch. Then two or three people go to the town, and the other people remain in the bush. If the people who went to the town find people sleeping, then they point their guns inside a house and fire. Then people die. Then they go back running to meet the other people. Then they all gather in one place and return singing to their own town. Then they beat the drum and rejoice. Then the people who remained in the town say: Tell us the news as you went. Then they tell the news. Then the headman sits down and tells all the people in town that a person must not go anywhere alone. Then all the people hear, and all sit down (remain around their town to await events).

726 539

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

Ngang (Doctor). Translation.

[787] 726 539 789 The Ngang (witch doctor) prophesies war. If the war comes and is in the bush, then the doctor takes medicine wrapped in bush cat skin called *mebup*, and medicine in horns. He holds the horns in his hands. He counts the horns; he hangs the *mebup*. He says to the *mebup*, I say thus: No person must go to the forest. If a person goes anywhere the enemy will kill him. If a person says, I will not listen to the doctors' talk, I will go and do my work; then if he goes, the enemy kill him. If they kill a person, they take the heart and put it in the *abup*. They take an old witch and put it in the *abup*. Then if the doctor prophesies, the witch speaks from inside the medicine. The heart of the person, it talks.

XVI.—*Hunting Traps.*

224 The Fang are skilful hunters, but they justly give the credit of the chase to the *Nqui* (dwarfs). I have been told that a dwarf will go hunting in the bush and return with meat after a hunting party has returned unsuccessful from the same locality; the dwarfs have great patience. If while hunting in the forest a man sees a deer, he shouts for assistance: others come and help hunt. If the deer is killed, all claim a share, after one-third has been given to the man who first sighted the game. This is the custom when a man walking unarmed in the forest sights meat, and calls for aid. Meat killed by a regular hunting party is carried to their town and divided. Dogs are used to hunt game, the dogs wear wooden bells around the neck, sometimes the bells are made of iron. Flint-lock guns are used when hunting. Before a hunting party starts out it is the custom to make *biang nzali* (gun medicine), and to place the guns in it; this makes them shoot straight. The natives imitate very cleverly the calls of certain animals and birds for the purpose of decoy. Occasionally they drive game into an enclosure called *olam*. Spears are seldom used in the chase. The crossbow is used for shooting birds and small bush cats.

Poisoned arrows are not used with the crossbow. Pitfalls for game are dug and [441] covered with small branches and leaves; pigs and small deer frequently fall into them. A Fang never attempts to hit a bird on the wing. In firing the flint-locks the gun is not carried to the shoulder, but held by the stock in front of the body, the butt being on a level with the waist. Game laws are unknown.

After a successful hunting expedition the whole town indulges in a feast, men, women, and children eat until gorged; after a period of rest dancing commences and is kept up throughout the night.

Olam (Trap). Translation.

224 539 They take small trees and bamboo leaves and bush rope, and make a long fence. They leave holes for the traps and holes for the pitfalls (*i.e.*, opposite the

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

places where they are going to build these respectively), large bush rat, porcupine, squirrels, die in the traps; deer, gazelle, antelope, large deer and pigs die in the pitfalls. The animals which die in the *olam* are these. This is the *olam*. 224 539

XVII.—*Burials.*

Death is never considered as due to natural causes. Disease followed by death is due to *evus* (witch). It is not considered unlucky to attend a dying person. The body is usually left in the house until burial. Embalming is not practised. Mourners smear white clay on their bodies and wear necklaces of pineapple fibre for one moon (month). A coffin is not used and the body is buried in the sitting posture. After burial the grave is levelled off as is the case almost throughout West Africa; the only difference between the burial of a headman and a common man is in the amount of visitors and mourning, and the quarrelling over his goods. Wives of a dead headman remain in mourning from one to three moons (months). The witch doctor, *ngangan*, usually performs a post mortem to find the witch. I attended a post mortem on an old woman. The witch doctor ripped open the abdomen with an old rusty knife, grasped and cut away the uterus and holding it up to the crowd declared "Six witches!" The crowd passed the word "six witches," and spoke the praises of the witch doctor. Relations usually continue to mourn or wail for one moon while inside the house or at work in the gardens. The most common wail is *Ó nan Ó! Ó tat Ó!* (Oh mother! Oh father!). 764 [761] 765 [763]

XVIII.—*Akóm.*

This is a dance. It is not *biang* (medicine) nor is it *ekí*. It is, however, practised by men only. The women must not see it. The latter stay within doors, and only hear the words which the men speak outside. The men speak with artificial voices, so that the women cannot recognise who it is that is speaking. (*Fam a kobo ne kié zié nkót.*) To make the artificial sounds they use a membrane (*ism*) which encloses the young of the spider (*adzabóa*). This they spread over a hole (about ¼ inch diameter) near the small end of an elephant tusk (*mbang nsak*) from 1 to 2½ feet in length, attaching it with beeswax (*abé*) or a liquid which is obtained from a plantain stalk fresh cut. This juice is called *akiri*. It possesses an adhesive property. The man blows on the large end of the ivory. A curious sound then issues through the membrane so that the man's voice cannot be recognised. This instrument is called *mbang akóm*. The act of playing on the instrument is called *e kobe akóm* (*e kobe*, talk). The performer sings songs; the words are distinctly heard. He sings and all others sing responsively (*a yo bé'bengese b'aka*). 535 534

Many songs are used in *akóm*. Here are three specimens of them:— 533

(1) *Benas b'abete kobo? Beso benga wog med.* Who speaks any more? (*i.e.*, Be silent, let no one speak.) Others are listening with pleasure (*i.e.*, to the performance). 539

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

533 Response by the audience: *Nangekobe.* This word seems to have no meaning but to be simply used as a responsive utterance.

539 (2) *Akôm ke yeye nnam.* Let not the *akôm* sing my song. This supposes that another similar performance (*akôm*) is going on in the neighbourhood, and the performers in it are urged not to make use of the song used by those in the first (*akôm*).

Response: *Ziania, akôm ke yeye nnam.* The word *ziania*, like *nangekobe*, appears to have no meaning, and to be simply used as a responsive utterance.

(3) *K'o bele me nnak nem ne mabata.* Do not catch hold of my instrument (tusk of elephant) with *mabata*, *i.e.*, because you have the sickness *mabata* (a kind of sloughing phagedina).

Response: *Ziania*; *ke bele me nnak nem ne mabata.*

XIX.—*Abnormalities* (*Natural Deformities*), *Albinism*, *Erythrism*.

732 143 During my residence among the Fang I saw five albinoes (shown on lantern slide). The natives say of these albinoes: "They are white, but *not real* white people." They are treated fairly well; their ever restless eyes cause them much ridicule and annoyance. I know of only one being married. They are not long lived. After death the skull of an albino is greatly valued for medicine, especially for placing with the *bieng-ahumayeng* (protector of the tribe).

Erythrism is occasionally met with. A red-haired Fang lived in the town of Jam-anen (large affair); his skin was chocolate colour, but his eyes had a pale pinkish colour. The first sight of a red-headed black man surprised me very much.

Hare lip is very rarely seen.

One case of hermaphrodism came under my notice, a Fang male; he was looked on as an *nyengwa* (witch doctor) of great power, and was much reverenced.

Deformations (*Artificial Deformities*).

304 A. *Facial.*—The triangular nasal cartilage is frequently pierced. This practice is mostly indulged in by women. Bars of bamboo are inserted or porcupine quills. It is considered *mbeng* (handsome).

The lips are not pierced or deformed in any way.

The ears are pierced and ear-rings worn.

Fetish is also suspended from the ears.

B. *Dental.*—Males file the upper and lower incisors to a sharp point. The only reason given is, "it is *mbeng*" (handsome).

XX.—*Fang Proverbs and Sayings.*

539 *Me bôm wum alem*, I think in my heart.

Me ka, I am gone, said in taking leave.

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

A akukut nlem, he has a foolish heart.

A ngogi ngôle nie, he likes his own body (is conceited). 539

Asé dibi tyinebe mewu, this matter (palaver or quarrel) is pushed back (*i.e.*, is to be forgotten).

Wyen ngil, w'yen ndâ, mâ ekôge yen ewonben, you see your grandson and your great-grandson, but you cannot see the next generation.

Kunge ne a le we esuki, go; your father calls you down the street (a hint to leave).

Asung asuti da bâ awu, one rotten tooth spoils all (a person once caught lying cannot be trusted).

Me zi mone kui mayong mese, I am not sister's son to all tribes (*i.e.*, I am not everybody's servant).

Ejô enge ene gîma, another day is beautiful (like our saying "Every dog has his day").

Mon kun a'yen asuti, mon mâ meyen m'bei, you can see a ghost once but a person twice.

Mon mie medub m'bei, mon ngui adul: averti, you can cheat a Fang twice, a dwarf once (here the word *mie* is used for *Fang*).

Jô side asuti, there is more than one day (my turn will come).

M'nidie menge, I am not a child.

Discussion.

Mr. Crooke, after acknowledging the value of Dr. Bennett's researches among a most interesting people, called attention to the attribution of the art of metallurgy to the dwarf race, which corresponded with European folk-belief. He dwelt on the respect paid to the Palaver House; he gathered that a fire was kept there perpetually burning, though the cult of the sacred fire seemed to have been forgotten. It would thus correspond to the early Aryan institution of the house where the sacred fire was tended, which survived in the Greek Prytaneum. The author of the paper seemed to have failed to appreciate the motive of the rites of passing widows through fire and flagellating them. Judging from the analogy of similar rites in India and elsewhere, the object was to free the woman from the ghost of her late husband, which was supposed to cling to and possess her. 171

Mr. FitzGerald Marriott asked whether the witch-doctor who wore the white mask was a Ngi, since in certain parts of West Africa the witch-doctor was independent of the tribal society, while in others he was a member. He also asked whether the dance, in which Dr. Bennett says is played the "Embankong" (?) musical instrument made from an elephant's tusk, is in reality a species of secret society; for women and children are not allowed to see it, and it takes place by torch-light after dark. Thus it might answer to the Zan-gbe-to of the Slave Coast, which is a species of police society for seeing that every one is in his house after 9 o'clock at night, or like the Ayaka society of a district near the Kwa Ibo river, which sees that all the fires are out by a certain time. These societies also dance, sing and shout; therefore, as there is usually something beneath West African dances, it is probable that the players and dancers are a secret society or that there is some explanation for the existence of the dance. He also remarked

8: Bennett D-5 (ca. 1898) 1899 FH9 Fang FH9

171 that the rules of the Ngi society, which Dr. Bennett had read them, were a great step to obtaining the secret ritual of the society. Dr. Bennett had mentioned various ibets or taboos peculiar to this society; Mr. MARRIOTT said that these were to be found in most secret societies. For instance, in the Kofõn(g) of the little-known Limba tribe of Sierra Leone, one of the taboos was that of sitting on an axe, or other sharp instrument; another prohibition was that of allowing any one to hold a glowing firebrand to their face. These actions were tabooed because they were included in the ceremony of initiation. He knew other instances, and therefore he concluded that the taboos mentioned by Dr. Bennett were probably actions that formed part of the ritual of initiation or progression in the secret grades.

ORDINARY MEETING.

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MAY 30TH, 1899.

C. H. READ, Esq., F.S.A., *President, in the Chair.*

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and passed.

List of books lately presented to the Institute was read, and the thanks of the Meeting was expressed. Mr. Ling Roth's *Aborigines of Tasmania* was mentioned more especially.

Elections of RICHARD J. A. BERRY, Esq., and F. SWYNNERTON, Esq., as Fellows of the Institute, were announced.

The PRESIDENT then introduced Colonel R. C. TEMPLE, who proceeded to read his paper, "On the Beginnings of Currency," which was well illustrated by lantern slides. He also exhibited a valuable collection of Agri beads.

Discussion was carried on by the PRESIDENT, Professor RIDGWAY, and Mr. GOWLAND, the latter exhibiting a collection of Japanese currency in support of Colonel Temple's views.

After a short reply from Colonel TEMPLE, the evening closed with a vote of thanks to the lecturer.